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ABSTRACT

Interviews with eight female and eight male elementary principals in a Texas school district provide comparative information on career development differences among males, females, and persons from differing ethnic groups. The principals interviewed included nine Anglos, five Hispanics, one Black, and one Oriental. The data gathered covered age, teaching experience, professional training and degrees, career geographic location, first administrative position, persons who influenced them, expected administrative position in five years, ultimate professional goals, methods of gaining promotion, most rewarding type of administrative experience, most challenging administrative duty, and expectations about administrative positions. Among the findings are that female principals, especially Anglo females, waited longer than males for their first principalship; that more female principals had higher academic qualifications than the males; and that most interviewees had spent their entire teaching career in Texas elementary schools. (Author/RW)

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T I T L E

CAREER DEVELOPMENT OF MALE AND FEMALE ELEMENTARY PRINCIPALS
IN A SOUTHWEST SCHOOL DISTRICT

A U T H O R S

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T I T L E

CAREER DEVELOPMENT OF MALE AND FEMALE ELEMENTARY PRINCIPALS IN A SOUTHWEST SCHOOL DISTRICT

PURPOSE OF THE STUDY

The purpose of the study was to examine the career patterns of eight male and eight female, randomly selected, elementary school principals.

The research method used was the personal interview using a questionnaire which had previously been sent to the subjects.

JUSTIFICATION FOR THE STUDY

At the time of the study, there were over 800 active student files in the Department of Educational Administration and Supervision at The University of Texas at El Paso. The College of Education faculty are aware of the limitations to the number of administrative and supervisory positions available in and around El Paso. Realistic career counseling and career opportunities awareness have become essential aspects in advising students entering, remaining and exiting from the administration and supervision graduate programs offered by the University.

Most of the subjects in this research project are graduates of the local University. It is important to maintain follow-ups of these graduates to provide feedback which might result in program changes and improvements.

T H E S U B J E C T S

Total Number of Elementary Principals in this Study:	<u>16</u>
(8 female and 8 male)	
Total Number of Elementary (through Intermediate) Principalships in the School District:	<u>45</u>
Total Number of Male Elementary Principals in the District:	<u>29</u>
(64.5%)	
Percentage of Male Elementary Principals in the District in this Study:	<u>27.58%</u>
Total Number of Female Elementary Principals in the District:	<u>16</u>
(35.5%)	
Percentage of Female Elementary Principals in the District in this Study:	<u>50.00%</u>

Ethnicity of Elementary Principals in this Study:

<u>ETHNICITY</u>	<u>MALE</u>	<u>FEMALE</u>	<u>TOTAL</u>
Anglo	5	4	9
Hispanic:	2	3	5
Black:	0	1	1
Oriental:	<u>1</u>	<u>0</u>	<u>1</u>
TOTALS. . .	8	8	16

Average age of Male Principals:	47.0 years
Average age of Female Principals:	49.5 years

The youngest principal was 38 (female) and the oldest was 65 (female).

RESULTS OF THE STUDY

Average number of years teaching before first principalship (male and female): 18.37 years

ETHNIC BREAKDOWN OF FOREGOING:

Anglo:	21.22 years
Hispanic:	12.8 years
Black:	21 years
Oriental:	18 years

SEX BREAKDOWN OF FOREGOING:

Male:	16.12 years
Female:	20.62 years
<u>Overall Range:</u>	7 -- 37 years

ELEMENTARY PRINCIPALS - MALE

Average Number of Years Teaching Before First Principalship:
16.12 years

Ethnic Breakdown of This:

Anglo:	18.6 years
Hispanic:	9.0 years
Oriental:	18.0 years

ELEMENTARY PRINCIPALS - FEMALE

Average Number of Years Teaching Before First Principalship:
20.62 years

Ethnic Breakdown of This:

Anglo:	24.5 years
Hispanic:	15.3 years
Black:	21 years

The following are summaries of the subjects' replies to questions during the interviews:

PROFESSIONAL PREPARATION:

All subjects in the study had both bachelors degrees and masters degrees; most of these were from the local university. One principal (female) had two masters degrees. Two female and six male principals had hours beyond the masters degree. Five female principals had superintendents' certificates; the other three females were working on administrators' certificates.

None of the principals were, at the time of the study, taking university courses. Six females planned to do more university work; two intended to obtain Ph.D's. One male planned to finish a second masters degree; two males said they would take more courses if the need arose; five males had no plans for more post graduate studies.

CAREERS:

Five female principals and seven male principals began and continued their teaching careers in Texas, while three females and four males have spent their entire teaching careers in El Paso. All the female principals' teaching careers were at the elementary level. Half the male principals' teaching careers were at the elementary level, and half had had some teaching in high schools.

Three female principals and five male principals were promoted to their first administrative position from schools in the predominantly upper middle-class area of the city of El Paso.

FIRST ADMINISTRATIVE POSITIONS:

Five female principals and six male principals reported their first administrative positions to have been assistant principals. Two females began as administrators in a Head-start program, and one as principal of a small, out-of-state school. One male principal began as an assistant coordinator in central office, and one as a teacher leader (department chairman).

PEOPLE INFLUENCING CAREERS:

Five female principals named a member of their family, and in particular, a parent, as being most influential in their careers; six females also mentioned central office administrators, and in particular, one of the assistant superintendents; two mentioned previous principals they had worked for, and two mentioned college professors.

Seven male principals reported that a principal they had worked for had greatly influenced their careers; one male men-

tioned a central office administrator; one male reported a college professor and one other male named a school clerk!

EXPECTED ADMINISTRATIVE POSITION IN FIVE YEARS:

Five female and three male principals saw themselves still in their present positions in five years.

Three females and one male hope to move to central office positions; one male principal hopes to be superintendent of a small school district. One female and two male principals will be retiring within five years.

ULTIMATE PROFESSIONAL GOALS:

Two female and three male principals believe they have achieved their ultimate professional goals. One female and two males aim to be superintendents; one female and one male aim to be high school principals. Three females and two males aim for central office positions; one female hopes to teach at the college level.

USE OF "GASing" AND "SPONSORING" IN PROMOTIONS:

Two female and five male principals believed that "GASing" was most often involved in district promotions. Five females and one male believed that "sponsoring" was most often involved. One female and two males believed promotions were due to a combination of these two. However, in regard to their own promotions, five female and two male principals believed that "GASing" was most applicable and one female and three males believed that "sponsoring" was most applicable. Two females and two males believed that a combination of the two was applicable. One male attributed his promotion to H.E.W. pressure. None of the females and three of the males thought the methods they considered most applicable to district promotions applied to their own promotions.

MOST REWARDING ADMINISTRATIVE EXPERIENCE:

Four female and four male principals reported improving the schools, achieving good rapport with people and satisfying other people's needs as their most rewarding administrative experiences. Two females reported receiving an award as their

most rewarding experience, and two other females reported all administrative experiences as being most rewarding. The other males reported working with curriculum, their first year as principal, the promotion to principal in itself, and "being the boss" as their most rewarding experience.

MOST CHALLENGING ADMINISTRATIVE DUTY:

One female and five male principals regarded school improvement as the most challenging factor in their position. Two females identified large enrollments; two males identified learning and motivation of students. Two females and two males identified teacher relations as their most challenging duty. The other females reported working with deaf students, promotion, implementation of PL 94-142, and today's society as the most challenging aspects of their positions. One male added busing as a most challenging duty.

EXPECTATIONS OF ADMINISTRATIVE POSITION:

Five female and three male principals reported that they were content and satisfied with their administrative positions. Two males were unhappy with the amount of red tape, federal intervention, and public pressure on their positions. The other females reported dissatisfaction with the "slowness of goal implementation," the quality of administrative and clerical assistance, and the exclusion of principals from district policy-making. The other male principals reported dissatisfaction because "not every child was reached," the job was boring, and teachers were too dependent on their principals.